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THREE SERMONS

PREACHED IN THE

CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PETER'S,
MARITZBURG,

BY

THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF NATAL.

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A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PETER'S, MARITZBURG,

On Sunday Morning, May 13, 1866,

BY THE

RIGHT REVEREND THE LORD BISHOP OF NATAL.

DEUT xii.19.—*Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth.*

THE history of the institution of the Levites in Israel is not a little perplexing. The text, however, brings the subject of the Levites before us, and in order to understand these words,—as well as the whole chapter from which they are taken, and which has been read for the First Lesson of this morning,—it is necessary to refer somewhat at length to that history. I propose to do this more particularly this morning, and in the evening I shall endeavour to draw some general practical lessons, suited for the present time, from the matter thus considered.

If we turn to the Book of Numbers, we find an account of the Levites being solemnly set apart by express Divine command for the service of the Sanctuary. They were not, however, to act as *Priests*, that office being expressly reserved for the "sons of Aaron," and the penalty of death being threatened for any that should presume, not being of the seed of Aaron, to discharge the duties of the Priesthood:—

'Thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their Priest's office; and *the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.*' N.iii.10,38.

But the Levites were to "minister to" the priests, to "stand before" Aaron and his sons, as the office of the Priests was to "stand before" Jehovah:—

'Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them—[lit. make them stand]—before Aaron the Priest, that they may minister unto him. . . . And thou

shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel.' N.iii.6-9.

Their business was to take charge of the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof, and all its belongings:—

'they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle.' N.i.50.

And the Levites, too, were set apart, like the Priests, for their sacred duties under the terrible sanction, that whoever should intrude into their office should be put to death:—

"When the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down, and, when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up; and *the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.*' *v.*51.

Accordingly, in the account of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, this distinction between the Priests and Levites is very strongly marked. Dathan and Abiram, in fact, were laymen, who rebelled against the authority of Moses: but Korah and his company were Levites, who murmured against Aaron.

'And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi! Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself to do the service of the tabernacle of Jehovah, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? And He hath brought thee near, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and *seek ye the Priesthood also?*—for which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against Jehovah: for what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?' N.xvi.8-11.

And when, according to this narrative, the earth had 'opened' her mouth, and 'swallowed up' Korah and his party, and their families, and a fire "had come out from Jehovah," that "consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense," the Priest Eleazar received a Divine command, to gather up out of the burning the brazen censers which they carried, and to make with the metal "broad plates for the covering of the altar,"—

"To be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before Jehovah, that he be not as Korah and as his company." *v.*40.

And so, too, the Levites were not even to look upon the holy things which it was their duty to carry; they were not to go near, to bear the sacred vessels, until the Priests had covered them:—

"When Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the Sanctuary and all the vessels of the Sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward, *after that* the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it; but they shall not touch any holy thing, *lest they die.*" iv.15.

"Cut ye not off the tribe of the family of the Kohathites from among the Levites. But thus do unto them, that *they may live and not die*, when they approach unto the most holy things. Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service and to his burden. But *they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die.*" N.iv.18-20.

And again we read that "Jehovah said unto Aaron"—

"Thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee. But thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle. Only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the Sanctuary and the Altar, *that neither they, nor ye also, die.*" N.xviii.1-3.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that in *this* part of the Pentateuch, not only are both Priests and Levites, "the whole tribe of Levi," separated in the most solemn manner from the other tribes of Israel, but within that tribe the family of Aaron is as solemnly severed from the rest, and set apart exclusively for the work of the Priesthood.

In the Book of Deuteronomy, however, from which the text is taken, we find no signs of any such distinction. Throughout the whole Book we find continual mention of "the Priests the Levites," or "the Priests the sons of Levi," as if the two words, 'Priests' and 'Levites,' were convertible, and expressed identically the very same body of persons. We there read, for instance,—

"Thou shalt come unto *the Priests the Levites*, and unto the Judge that shall be in those days," xvii.9,—

"He shall write him a copy of this Law in a book, out of that which is before *the Priests the Levites*," xvii.18,—

"*The Priests the Levites*, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel," xviii.1,—

"*The Priests the sons of Levi* shall come near; for them Jehovah thy God hath chosen, to minister unto Him and to bless in the name of Jehovah," xxi.5,—

and similarly in other places, as xxiv.8,xxvii.9,xxxi.9. And so, too, in this Book of Deuteronomy, the word "Levite is used simply by itself to express a "Priest," as where we read—

"If *a Levite* come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned, and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which Jehovah shall choose, then he shall *minister in the name of Jehovah* his God, as all *his brethren the Levites* do, which *stand there before Jehovah.*" xviii.6,7.

"At that time Jehovah separated the tribe of Levi"—mark, the whole tribe of Levi, not the family of Aaron only—"to *bear the ark* of the Covenant of Jehovah, to *stand before Jehovah*, to *minister unto Him*, and to *bless in His Name*, as it is this day." x.8.

But it was the duty of the *Priests*—not of the Levites, generally—to "bear the Ark"—that is, to bear it uncovered in solemn processions, Jo.iii.3,6,8,13,14,15,17,1K.ii.26,

viii.3, &c. And, accordingly, in Deuteronomy we read in one place of "*the Levites*, which bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah," xxxi.25, and in another place, of "*the Priests the Levites*," as doing the same, *v*.9. So it was the Priest—and not the Levites—whose office it was to "stand before *Jehovah*," (that is, to stand before the holy of holies in the Tabernacle, in which was the Ark, the visible sign of Jehovah's presence,) and to minister unto *Jehovah*; while the Levites only stood before the *Priests* or before the *Congregation*, and ministered to *them*, N.iii.6, xvi.9, xviii.2. And so, again, it was the Priests alone, who were commanded to bless in Jehovah's name, L.ix.22, N.vi.22-27.

It is plain, then, that in this Book of Deuteronomy the 'Priest' is really the same as the 'Levite.' The two words are used as convertible terms; and the distinction between the Priests and the Levites, which is so marked in the Book of Numbers, entirely disappears in Deuteronomy. Hence, whereas in Levitieus and Numbers, the Priests are repeatedly styled the "sons of Aaron," L.i.5,7,8,11,ii.2,iii.2,xiii.2,N.x.8, anda re *never once* called the "sons of Levi," in Deuteronomy, on the contrary, they are repeatedly called the "sons of Levi" or "Levites," as you have heard, and they are *never once* called the "sons of Aaron."

Now this is very remarkable, and must be felt to be so by any one, who has once had his attention called to it. In one of the very last chapters of Numbers, at the very end of the forty years wanderings' of the Israelites in the wilderness, and therefore only just before the time at which the story in Deuteronomy is supposed to begin, we find the distinetiou between the Priests and the Levites maintained as strongly as ever. After the conquest of Midian, it was ordered that the booty should be divided into two parts—one half for the men of war who went on that expedition, the other for the rest of the people who stayed behind: and from the share of the first, the men of war, a tribute was to be taken, one out of five hundred, for Jehovah, and this was to belong to the *Priests*; while from the other half, the people's portion, one out of fifty was to be taken for the *Levites*. N.xxxi.48-47. How is it, then, that this distinction immediately disappears, when we turn a few pages on to the Book of Deuteronomy, supposed to have been written by Moses himself—or, at all events, to have been spoken by

him—only a short time afterwards? Is it possible to suppose that Moses could have so suddenly changed the whole tone of his discourses, as this would imply—more especially, if the solemn ordinances for the strict separation of Priests and Levites had been uttered, in his hearing, by the Mouth of Jehovah Himself?

No! it is not conceivable. And this, in fact, is one of the phenomena which have drawn closer attention to the Book of Deuteronomy, and led to a more careful examination of its contents,—the result of which is that, as I have already told you, no doubt now remains in the minds of the most eminent scholars, who have thoroughly and dispassionately studied the subject, that this Book was written at a very late age in the history of Judah,—as some think, in the age of Manasseh,—as I believe, a very little later, in that of Josiah, that is, eight or nine hundred years after the time of the Exodus. Accordingly, in the prophetical writings of *that* and a later age, we find the very same expression, which appears so frequently in Deuteronomy, "the Priests the Levites," repeated continually, while the Priests are never spoken of as the "sons of Aaron." Thus in Jer.xxxiii.17-22 we read—

"Thus saith Jehovah, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; neither shall *the Priests the Levites* want a man before me, to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually. . . . If ye can break my covenant of the day and my covenant of the night, that there should not be day and night in their season, then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne, and with *the Levites the Priests*, my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and *the Levites that minister unto me*." xxxiii.17-22.

And so in Ez.xliii.19, xliv.15, xlviii.13, Mal.iii.3, *comp.* Mal.ii.4-8; and even the name of Aaron, on which such stress is laid in Leviticus and Numbers, where the Priests are always called the "sons of Aaron," is not so much as mentioned by anyone of the Prophets, except only *once* in Mic.vi.4.

This, then, is plainly one peculiarity, which marks the Book of Deuteronomy as a composition of a far later date than that usually assigned to it. And I will now point to another equally strong indication of this,—one more immediately connected with the text before us, and helping, in fact, to explain its significance:—

"Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite, as long as thou livest upon the earth."

We have seen that by *Levites* the Deuteronomist really means *Priests*. But, whether by this expression is meant Priest or common Levite, what can such a command as this by any possibility mean, if supposed to come from the pen or from the lips of Moses? "Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite"! And there are many other passages in this Book which repeat in effect a similar injunction:—

"Thou shalt eat there before Jehovah thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thine household, and *the Levite that is within thy gates*; *thou shalt not forsake him*; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee." xiv.26,27.

Here we find the Levite included, as a needy and dependant person, within the range of each householder's charity. The Israelite is to eat, year by year, "before Jehovah his God, in the place which He shall choose to place His Name there"—

"the tithe of his corn, of his wine, and of his oil, and the firstlings of his herds and of his flocks," *v*.23;

or, if the place of the Sanctuary is too far off for him to take to it the tithes in kind, he is to turn them into money and take this to the holy place, and feast upon it there with his family; but he is "not to forsake the Levite"—he must remember to let the Levite also have a share in his enjoyment. And so, again and again, we find the Levite in this Book of Deuteronomy put on the same level exactly with "the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow":—

"And the *Levite*, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the *stranger*, and the *fatherless*, and the *widow*, that are within thy gates, shall come and shall eat and be satisfied," xiv.29;

"And thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the *Levite* that is within thy gates, and the *stranger*, and the *fatherless*, and the *widow* that are among you" xvi.11.

"And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the *Levite*, and the *stranger*, and the *fatherless*, and the *widow*, that are within thy gates." xvi.14.

It is plain that the "Levite" is here spoken of as in a very necessitous condition, dependant, like "the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow," upon the liberality of others. Yet how very strange and utterly inexplicable is this upon the traditionary view, that Moses wrote or spoke this Book of Deuteronomy! For, in the foregoing Books of Leviticus and Numbers, abundant provision had been made, not from the voluntary charities of the people, but from the sacrifices of every kind which they were bound under the Divine Law to

offer, for the support both of the Priests and of the Levites, L.ii.3,v 13,N.vi.18,29,vii.9,x.12,13,N.xviii. Nay, the very tithes, which each householder is here permitted to make a feast of with his family,—only "not to forsake the Levite," to let him also have a share in it,—are especially assigned by Jehovah himself *wholly* to the Levites, as their own particular due, only that they were to give a tenth of all to the Priests. Thus we read—

"The *tithes* of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave-offering unto Jehovah, I have given to the *Levites* to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Thus speak unto the Levites and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave-offering of it for Jehovah, even a tenth part of your tithe. . . . . And ye shall give thereof Jehovah's heave-offering to Aaron the Priest. . . . . Then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshing floor, and as the increase of the winepress. And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households; for it is your reward for your service in the Tabernacle of the Congregation. L.xviii.26-31.

And so, too, the "firstlings," which also were allowed for these family feastings, were assigned in the Book of Numbers exclusively to the *Priests*, xviii.15-18.

How is it, then, conceivable that Moses, after receiving (as is supposed) these commands from Jehovah Himself,—after having at the very end of the Book of Numbers, at the close of the fortieth year of the wanderings, assigned forty-eight cities for the Levites to live in, with their "suburbs for their cattle, and for their goods, and for their beasts," xxv.1-8,—would immediately afterwards proceed to speak of them as ranked among the needy and destitute? Supposing even that (as some might say) he foresaw that in a later day the laws of sacrifice would be neglected, that the "firstlings" would not be paid to the Priests, nor the "tithes" to the Levites, and that the forty-eight cities would never really be reserved for their use, can it be believed that he would himself deliberately, in his last address to the people of Israel, sweep away at a stroke all these Divine commands, and recognize it as the right and proper thing to do,—an act of the truest piety, of the most devout obedience to the Will and Word of Jehovah,—an act by means of which, it is expressly said, "they might learn to fear Jehovah their God always," D.xiv.23—if each Israelite consumed annually, "before Jehovah his God, in the place which He shall choose to place his Name there,"

in a joyous feast for himself and his family, the very means of sustenance which were expressly prescribed for the Priests and Levites, provided only that he did not "forsake" the latter, but allowed them, with other indigent persons, to share in the good things which he and his enjoyed to the full—to "feed upon the crumbs which fell from his table"?

No! I repeat, it is not conceivable. But here, again, we have a decisive indication of the later age in which the Book of Deuteronomy was written. It is probable that we very greatly over-estimate the number and importance of the Priests in the time of the kings of Judah, taking for granted that they really enjoyed the privileges and dignities, which are assigned to them by the laws of the Pentateuch. Yet, if we carefully examine the more authentic history of the later kings, which we find in the Second Book of Kings, we shall perceive indications that their number was but small and their influence inconsiderable. In the days of Josiah—the age in which Deuteronomy was written—there were, we find, a "chief Priest," some "Priests of the second order," and others who are called "keepers of the door," 2K.xxiii.4. These "door-keepers" are expressly called "Priests," 2K.xii.9; and in the time of Josiah's son, Zedekiah, there were only *five* Priests altogether, ministering in the Temple, 2K.xxv.18, *viz.* one "chief Priest," one "second Priest" or "Priest of the second order," and three "keepers of the door."

From the fact that these "door-keepers" were in those days regarded as Priests, it is easy to see how the Deuteronomist would make no distinction between the higher and lower clergy, but would call them all by one common name "Priests" or "Levites." In Solomon's time, no doubt, they were more numerous. And then, probably, amidst the first glories of the newbuilt Temple, some attempt was made to maintain a distinction between the Priests and Levites, under the influence of Zadok, the chief Priest of that time. For this Zadok, we find, had supported the young king, then but a youth, the youngest of all the sons of David, in his claim for the throne, in opposition to his oldest brother Adonijah. Nor does he appear to have interfered at all to check the ruthless hand of Solomon, when like a true Eastern despot—or like a Zulu king—he made sure his own seat on the throne of his father David by putting his brother to death, 1K.ii.24, as well as his father's gray-

headed captain, Joab whom he ordered to be dragged from the horns of the altar of Jehovah, to which he had fled for refuge, and butchered in cold blood. In like manner Solomon, we are told, "put Zadok the Priest in the room of Abiathar," in the room of that aged Priest, who had been with his father in all his trials, from the time when he wandered for fear of Saul in the wilderness of Judah, and to whom, because he too had supported the claims of Adonijah, the eldest son of David, the ungenerous king uttered the harsh word—

"Get thee to Anathoth unto thine own fields, for thou art worthy of death. But I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the Ark of the Lord God before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted. So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto Jehovah." 1K.ii.26,27.

This would, indeed, have been a strange act for this young prince, to have "thrust out" from his holy office a High Priest, anointed with the holy oil, wearing the consecrated garments, handed down along the line of Priests from father to son from the time of Aaron, E.xxix.29, N.xx.28,—one who had given repeatedly Divine oracles to David, 1S.xxiii.9, xxx.7,—it is supposed by means of the Urim and Thummim, the mysterious jewels set in the holy breastplate, E.xxviii.30. It would, I say, have been strange indeed, if a youth of seventeen, or eighteen at most, could have ventured to do this, and evidently with the consent and approval—probably by the advice,—of such counsellors as Nathan the Prophet and Zadok the Priest,—*if* it were necessary to regard the account in the Pentateuch, which sets forth in such strong terms, the high prerogatives of the Priesthood—much more of the Chief Priest,—as infallibly, or even historically, true.

But in these arbitrary proceedings, in which, unquestionably, the new Chief Priest must have taken a very leading part, we see sufficient evidence of the stirring energy, the pushing forwardness, of Zadok's character. Nathan the Prophet disappears at once from the field of the history; he was probably by this time advanced in age, and may soon have died: but two of his sons appear in the list of Solomon's chief officers, 1K.iv.5. At the head of that list, however, stands "Azariah the son of Zadok," *v*.1; and Zadok himself appears in it as Priest, now put over the head of his aged senior Abiathar, who is still named indeed as one of the Priests,—"Zadok and Abiathar were the Priests,"—but

who had been practically "thrust out" of office altogether. That Zadok, in fact, did fill a very prominent and active part in that age, in the ordering of public worship, and the arrangement of priestly duties, in connection with the new Temple, we cannot doubt. And, indeed, it is indicated plainly enough by the circumstance, that in the later times, though the Priests are never called by any of the Prophets "sons of Aaron," they are spoken of as "the House of Zadok," 2Ch.xxxi.10; and so Ezekiel repeatedly distinguishes the *faithful* Priests, as "sons of Zadok," from the "Levites" or the "Priests the Levites," generally, as in Ez.xl.46,xliii.19, xliv.15,xlviii.11. It would seem that Zadok must have left an impress of his work upon his own age, the remembrance of which had been retained traditionally. And, if the Book of Deuteronomy was composed in the age of Josiah, it is not at all improbable that many of the regulations in Leviticus and Numbers, which define the duties of the Priesthood, and draw such a strong line of division between the Priests and the inferior ministers or Levites, at whatever time they may have been committed to writing, originated in the age of Solomon and his great ecclesiastical dignitary, Zadok.

However this may be, certainly in later times, as I have said, we see no signs of such a distinction, or of any such dignity, as respects position, numbers, or wealth, attaching to the Priesthood in Israel. As to *position*, it is remarkable that we find the Priests ranked in David's time far down in the list of his officers, *after* the commander of the forces, Joab, and *after* the officer called the recorder,—apparently the master of the rolls, or keeper, and perhaps writer, of the records of the reign,—2S.viii.16,17. In the list of Solomon's princes, they rank still lower,—after the president of the council, after the scribes or secretaries of state, after the recorder, after the commander of the forces, as before, 1K.iv. 2-4. Then as to *numbers*, even in Solomon's time we read of only *two* Priests, 1K.iv.4, though these, no doubt, had many subordinate assistants; but in Zedekiah's, as you have heard, the whole body of ecclesiastics employed at the temple was only *five*. In fact, the area of the temple itself was only 4,000 square feet, just exactly twice the size of this small cathedral: but then the sacrifices were not offered in the temple itself, but in the court outside it. Lastly, as to *wealth*, it would seem that even for this small body of Priests and Levites the supplies of necessary food were sometimes

deficient. It is reasonable to believe that, in the time of David and Solomon, a portion of the royal revenues was applied directly to the support of Divine Worship. But under the later kings we have unmistakeable signs of the poverty of the Priests. Thus the Chronicler informs us that Hezekiah ordered afresh the courses of the Priests and Levites, restoring the sacrificial system "as it is written in the Law of Jehovah," 2Ch.xxxi.2,3; and provided especially for their maintenance, by enjoining that "tithes" and "first-fruits" should be brought in as of old; and they were brought in abundantly, we read, "heaps on heaps," *v.*6.

"Then Hezekiah questioned with the Priests and Levites concerning the heaps. And Azariah the chief Priest, of the House of Zadok, answered him and said, *Since the people began to bring the offerings into the House of Jehovah, we have had enough to eat*, and have left plenty." *v.*9,10.

From this it would appear that, *before* the order in question was issued, the Priests and Levites had *not* enough to eat. We find this statement, however, in the narrative of the Chronicler, who, as I have shown on a former occasion cannot be depended upon as a trustworthy authority on any point, where the Levitical body is concerned, unless he is supported by other evidence. As Dean Stanley observes, *Jewish Church, 2nd Series*, p.124,130:—

Full of interest and beauty as is the Book of Chronicles, it yet, least of any of the sacred books, partakes of the supernatural gift of *courageous impartiality*, which elsewhere is so remarkable. . . . . The Levitical Priest may have been the least Divine of all the Mosaic institutions. The Levitical Book of Chronicles may have been the last and least of all the sacred books.

On this particular point, however, the general conclusion, which we should draw from the above account of the state of things in Hezekiah's days, is abundantly confirmed by the numerous passages in Deuteronomy, which include the Levites with the poor and destitute, with "the widow, the fatherless, and the stranger,"—which speak of their "sojourning" about the land as dependants and vagrants, "within the gates" of others, instead of living in their own Levitical cities, as prescribed in the Book of Numbers. In Solomon's time it is quite possible that, under the royal authority, an attempt was made to assign such towns for the support of the Temple ministry. But the whole arrangement must have broken down immediately after Solomon's death, when the Ten Northern Tribes revolted from his son Rehoboam, and separated from the tribe of Judah. For it is made a

special complaint against Jerobeam son of Nebat, the first king of Israel, that he—

"made priests indiscriminately of the people, which were not of the *sons of Levi*." 1K.xii.31.

Our E.V. has it—"he made priests of the lowest of the people;" but that is a mistake in our translation. And accordingly the Rev. Thos. Scott says, in his very orthodox commentary—

Rather, he made priests from every extremity of the land, as from every tribe and family without exception.

From this time the Levites lost certainly any hold they might ever have had upon the thirty-five cities spoken of as set apart for them in the northern kingdom; while there is no sign that they ever had possession of the other thirteen cities in the kingdom of Judah.

There can be no doubt, then, that in the time of the Deuteronomist, the "Priests the Levites" were generally in a very needy condition. The few, who actually ministered at the Temple, would, we may believe, be sufficiently provided for: and others, as Jeremiah, xxxii.6-12, may have had some private property, acquired by purchase or inheritance. So the Deuteronomist says—

"If a Levite come from any of the gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned, and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which Jehovah shall choose, then he shall minister in the name of Jehovah his God, as all his brethren the Levites do, which stand there before Jehovah. They shall have like portions to eat, beside that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony." xviii.6-8.

But the very language of this provision seems to imply that there was no very eager desire on the part of the Levites generally to come up to Jerusalem, and devote themselves to the work of the Temple ministry. And, since we find so few in actual attendance at the Temple in the days of Josiah and Zedekiah, it is probable that the inducement here held out, of sharing "like portions" with "all their brethren, who stood there before Jehovah" to minister, was not sufficient to attract many from their other more secular employments in different parts of the land. What these were, and how far they secured for them a livelihood, does not appear. Perhaps, they were engaged in teaching and conducting religious services of some kind among those Israelites, who lived away from the City and the Temple. But it would seem that very many must have been in impoverished circumstances, so that "the Levite" became habitually con-

nected in thought with "the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow." "Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite,"—was now the appeal made to the pity and charitable consideration of his brethren. The original tithe-system, as laid down in the Levitical Law, was evidently no longer effective, if, indeed, it was ever at any time in full operation. Here, however, in the context, of which the text forms a part, it would seem, a plan is suggested, much more likely to be popular and practically effective; since the "tithes" and "firstlings" were on this system to be consumed—at the Temple indeed, "in the place which Jehovah would choose," but—in feasting there by the tithe-payer and his family, the poor Levite "within his gates" being included only as a guest.

"Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the *tithe* of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the *firstlings* of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave-offerings of thy hand. But thou must eat them before Jehovah thy God in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates; and thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth." xii.17-19.

Thus the "Levite within the gates" is ranked in Deuteronomy after "son and daughter, manservant and maidservant," in the enjoyment of those good things, the tithes and firstlings, which, according to the Law in Levitiens and Numbers, the body to which he belonged had a right to claim entirely as their own particular portion, under an express Divine command. Like "the stranger, the widow, and the fatherless," or any other poor dependant, he might go up with his wealthier brother and his family, and look to be permitted to share in their joy.

I have said that I will reserve to this evening the more direct practical consideration of this subject. Yet one word before we part. You see that the old system failed, which enjoined on every householder to set apart his tithes and firstlings for the support of the Priest. What else could have been expected, when mere authority was relied on to compel such contributions for the maintenance of a Priesthood, often profligate in the extreme, whom Jeremiah, living in the days of the Deuteronomist, describes as impious and idolatrous—

"The Priests said not, Where is Jehovah? and they that handle the Law, knew me not." ii.8.

"Both Prophet and Priest are profane: yea, in my House have I found their wickedness, saith Jehovah." xxiii.11.

"At that time, saith Jehovah, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves. And they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have worshipped." viii.1.2.

"A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land! The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof." iv.30,31.

And what will it be in the end in *our* land, if the prophets shall "prophesy falsely," and the priests once more, as in the days of old, shall come to "bear rule by their means"? What will it be, if the truth is suppressed, and traditionary falsehood propagated,—if a National Establishment is maintained for the very purpose of stopping thought and checking utterance, when the progress of the times requires that the old forms should be replenished with new life, and God's eternal truths be brought forward, as powerful and fresh as in the days of the Deuteronomist, but clothed in such language, enforced by such arguments, as may best suit our own day, and not his? If the people love to have it so, I ask, what will the end be? It is easy to foresee—an end like that which befel the National Establishment in Israel, and, with the Church, the State also. Dishonesty and untruthfulness would spread, like a hateful canker over the land, if it is not spreading now under this very process. It would be with us, as in the days of Jeremiah, when he cried,—

"From the least of them even unto the greatest of them everyone is given to covetousness, and from the prophet even unto the priest everyone dealeth falsely." vi.13.

Let us hope and believe that the people "will *not* love to have it so,"—that, at all events, the laity of England will not desire—will not *allow*—the truth to be suppressed in the congregation,—that they will wish to have the whole truth told them,—that they will not believe that God can be served with falsehood, or that any portion of God's Truth can harm us,—nay, that anything in heaven or earth can harm us, if we are "following that which is good."

[No. 19.—Second Series.]

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PETER'S, MARITZBURG,

On Sunday Evening, May 13, 1866,

BY THE

RIGHT REVEREND THE LORD BISHOP OF NATAL.

DEUT xii. 19.—*Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth.*

I EXPLAINED this morning the circumstances under which these words were written, by one who most probably lived in the reign of Josiah, towards the end of the kingdom of Judah, but at a time when it was still hoped by devout and earnest men, like the prophet Jeremiah, that, by a timely repentance and a complete reformation, the impending evils might yet through God's Merey be averted. I explained also some facts in the history of the Levitical body, both in former ages and in that particular age, which throw light upon such a command as this, to "forsake not the Levite,"—a command which must strike everyone at once as singularly inconsistent with the privileges assigned to them in the Pentateuch, and the ample provision there made for their maintenance. I showed that they never really appear to have enjoyed those prerogatives,—that in Josiah's time, at all events, (the time of the Deuteronomist,) they were beyond all doubt in a very necessitous condition; so that, as Dean Stanley writes, *(Jewish Church, 2nd. Series,* p. 421):—

They often appear to have been a needy and ill-provided class. The Levites are constantly reckoned amongst the objects of eleemosynary support, and are described as dependant on irregular channels for their supplies even of ordinary food.

Let us now consider the questions, which are suggested by the text before us, somewhat more closely from a practical point of view. These questions appear to be two :—

(i) That of the *existence* of "Levites,"—in other words, of persons set apart for the due performance of religious acts and ceremonies on behalf of the whole community;

(ii) That of their *maintenance*, as justly to be supplied by those for whom they are expected to minister.

"Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite, as long as thou livest upon the earth."

I do not think that in this congregation I need dwell upon the second part of this subject. You have shown your willingness—you show it every Sunday, and you have shown it of late in a yet more forcible way—to recognize your duty to contribute to the support of a minister of God's Word among you. I shall rather, therefore, speak of what that minister should be, in accordance with your wants and the special needs of the present day.

We have lately been considering the question of the "Prophet." We have now to do with that of the "Priest" —that is, of one whose special business it is—not to teach, not to exhort, reprove, rebuke, not to advise and comfort, not to administer spiritual medicine to a mind diseased,—for all this is the work of the Prophet, who may, indeed, be also a Priest, as Jeremiah and Ezekiel were,—but to stand before God on behalf and in the name of their brethren,—to administer the rites which bind men together in one body, as a religious community,—to "offer gifts and sacrifices," and be the mouthpiece of the whole congregation, in lifting up the voice of praise and prayer to God. The Prophet's gifts "come from above, from the Father of Lights." The Priest is ordained of men, and enters upon his office vested with authority at the hands of his brethren, to act as their spokesman and representative. The Prophet speaks, in the Name of God, the Word of Truth, which goes to the conscience and the heart. The Priest speaks in the name of the Church; he absolves or condemns in the name of the Church; and his judgment may be utterly wrong, as it was of old when Caipahas pronounced "He hath spoken blasphemy!"—or as it was in later days, when, in strict accordance with the laws of the Church, the Priest sent the unbelieving philosopher to the prison, and the heretical reformer to the stake.

In the childhood of the world, as in the childhood of the individual, the Father in every Family was both Priest and Prophet, and was both by Divine ordinance. We need no proof of the right which a father, simply as such, possesses, to impress on the young and pliant mind a sense of its duties towards an Unseen Parent, to lead the devotions, to shape the creed, of his children. Does anyone suppose that there would be no honour for parents, no reverence from children, unless the Commandment of God was written on tables of stone to enforce it? It was His Command, most surely, long before written letters were invented. These, indeed, were a Divine Gift, and to be devoutly attributed to Him, who is the Spring and Source of all Light and Life. But an earlier, a more universal, Law has been written on the heart of man,—has been enforced among us by those Divine affections which God's own Breath has kindled, the law that a child should "hear the instruction of a Father."

And you, parents, will feel, I am sure, your duty in this respect,—to be the Prophets, and Priests, as well as the Rulers, of your household,—for all three functions are gathered up in the sacred name of Father. These are difficult times, no doubt, in which to exercise the most holy of all offices, in which to discharge the most momentous of all duties, within your own family circle,—when you feel that with you it rests to shape more or less the faith of your child, to train its feet gently in the way of life,—and when you feel perhaps also, that so much of what was taught, as unquestionable truth, in your own younger days, has now passed away never more to return. Yes! but the essence of all faith is there—

"He that cometh unto God must believe that He Is, and is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

You can say to your child, in the language of the Prophet—

"What does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

If perplexed yourself with many thoughts, and harassed with the controversies, to which the present age has given rise, and in which you feel you must take a part, from which you cannot escape,—rather, from which, as a true servant of God, as a faithful Christian, you cannot consent to withdraw yourself, you cannot consent, with a weak cowardice or a guilty indolence, to let the whole burden of them fall upon your children in the next generation,—you may always

fall back on those words, in which the writer of Ecclesiastes sums up "the conclusion of the whole matter,"—

"Fear God, and keep His Commandments, for this is the whole duty—rather, this is the whole—of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil;"—

words of which an eminent living Divine has truly said (Dean Stanley, *Jewish Church, 2nd Series*, p.259) :—

For all students of ecclesiastical history, for all students of theology, for all who are about to be religious teachers of others, for all who are entangled in the controversies of the present, there are no better words to be remembered than these, viewed in their original and immediate application. They are the true answer to all perplexities about Ecclesiastes and Solomon: they are no less the true answer to all perplexities about human life itself.

But you can do more than this: you can turn to the Bible, as a treasury of Divine Instruction, and teach them out of it. The Lord's Prayer is there, with its simple petitions, which the child can understand, while the hoary-headed saint can never exhaust their meaning. The Psalms are there, which tell how men lived and laboured, and longed after God and were suffered to find Him, in the ages long ago as now. The lives of good men and true are there, —with all their patient faith, their noble selfsacrifice, their joyous confidence, their sure belief in the final triumph of God and His Truth,—though chequered, it is true, with signs of human infirmity. Above all, the history of Christ himself is there, with its calm serene trust in the ever-present help of his Heavenly Father, with its purity and goodness, its holy hatred of sin, its pitiful compassion for the sinner, its boundless love to God and Man, exhibited in life and sealed in death. And you will find enough in all these, if you are faithful, to help you to do God's Work and speak God's Word in your families, to "bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." You can do this while you let them gradually receive the light of the present age, as God in His Providence shall send it to them,—in the reading of books, in the hearing of sermons, in the converse of friends, in the musings of their own hearts. You can aid them to draw from the Scripture narratives the rich lessons which they contain for our spiritual support and comfort, without therefore being obliged to renounce the reasoning powers, with which their Heavenly Father has blessed them as a part of His own Divine Image, and receive as infallible statements of fact what their own eyes see, enlightened by the light which shines around them, to be self-contradictory,

incredible, impossible. You can bid them also bend the knee around you in family prayer, and so be the Priest, in your household, as well as the Prophet. And there is no more pleasing sight than when this is regularly done in a well-ordered family. In such a case the right feeling in a Christian Minister, with whatever orders he may be himself invested, would be to reverence the father's Priesthood, and leave it to him, if he will, to lead the family devotions.

For, though the Church of God is doubtless a Family, a "household of faith," it does not extinguish, while yet it includes, family orders and distinctions. The latter are indeed more eminently sacred and holy than any Church orders, because they emanate more directly from God. They are not carnal, as some insinuate; they are not of this world; they are the pillars of God's Kingdom, the very foundations of the temple in which the Great Father of all is adored. Natural ties! natural obligations! Beware how any persuade you that these are merely secular and profane, good for a passing purpose, but of the earth, earthy, part only of this vain world, which passes away like a shadow! Shall I tell you what is merely secular and profane?—though it may have also its transitory uses. The desire of as much pleasure, comfort, ease,—of as much money,—of as much power,—as a man can get,—the wish to shine, to be praised, to cut a figure amongst others,—these impulses are too often the slaves of "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," which "are not of the Father, but of the world." Their uses are to make whips to scourge the indolence of the mere animal nature; they are meant to act as useful servants to oil the wheels of society. But, if the reins are left in their hands, they will hurry it over the precipice. The history of the world shows this in many a page, where the luxury, the pride, the refined sensuality, of an over-civilization, have stifled and destroyed all natural affections, duties, claims. It was so in the time of the Roman Emperors; it was so in France before the Revolution; and now in our days, it must be feared, it is too much the tendency of modern European civilization, to make light of the most sacred family ties and duties.

But the family, though the foundation, is not the whole of humanity. That consists of many families; and they are meant by the Divine Creator to act and react on one another. Hence, as I have explained on another occasion, the institu-

tion of the seven-days' week is marked out for all mankind through the phases of the moon, by natural signs, in the same kind of way, though not so distinctly, as the interchange of day and night. Hence also, in so many different nations, the irresistible impulse which leads men to come together for some kind of religious purpose, either on the new-moons, or more frequently at each successive interval of seven days, which divides the human period. The Sunday Rest—the Sunday Worship—is a blessed ordinance of man, to which he has been led by Divine Guidance. Strip it of the mere superstitions notions, which have made it so often a day of misery, or a day of profane and vicious dissipation; and the holy day becomes a holiday, the holiday a holy day, a day of recreation and refreshment for the body, of relaxation and enjoyment for the mind, of quickening stimulus, and devotional fervour and delight for the heart, and soul, and spirit,—and, in all this, of family happiness and cheerful union and communion with our kind, in the presence of Him who is the Great Friend and Father of all. And so, as the writer to the Hebrews says—

"Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is."

But, in order to have united worship, some must be chosen to preside, and keep order, and lead the rest in their devotions. The office, then, of teacher or *prophet*, will not always coincide with that of 'priest,' or with that of 'presbyter' or 'elder,' but will devolve upon those who may have the divine gifts of insight and utterance combined. Amongst the Hebrews we see one tribe, the Levites, exclusively set apart for the priesthood: while prophets arise here and there, as the Spirit of the Living God inspired them, and sometimes, as we have seen already, among the priests. So in the early Church there were "helps" and "governments," that is, persons who assisted in managing and ordering the affairs of the community, as well as "prophets" and "teachers," 1Cor.xii.28: there were "elders that ruled," as well as others who "laboured in the word and doctrine"; and these last were counted "worthy of double honour," or, rather, of double remuneration for their services. In our own Church there was a time, when the office of the Curate or Parish Priest was distinct from that of the Teacher. Thus the 16th Canon prescribes as follows:—

Every beneficed man, *not allowed to be a Preacher*, shall procure sermons to be preached in his cure once in every month at the least by preachers *lawfully*

licensed, if his living, in the judgment of the Ordinary, will be able to bear it. And upon every Sunday, when there shall not be a sermon preached in his cure, he or his curates shall read some one of the homilies prescribed or to be prescribed by authority, to the intents aforesaid.

And again it is added in the 49th Canon:—

No person whatsoever, *not examined and approved by the Bishop of the diocese*, or *not licensed*, as is aforesaid, *for a sufficient or convenient preacher*, shall take upon him to expound in his own cure, or elsewhere, any Scripture or matter of doctrine; but shall only study to read plainly and aptly (without glossing or adding) the homilies already set forth, or hereafter to be published by lawful authority, for the confirmation of the true faith, and for the good instruction and edification of the people.

And further it is laid down in the 43rd Canon, which treats of "Deans and Prebendaries":—

And in case they themselves be sick or lawfully absent, they shall substitute such *licensed preachers* to supply their turns, as by the Bishop of the diocese shall be thought meet to preach in cathedral churches. And, if any otherwise neglect or omit to supply his course, as is aforesaid, the offender shall be punished by the Bishop, or by him or them to whom the jurisdiction of that church appertaineth, according to the quality of the offence.

It has been very much the fashion of late, with a certain school of thought in the Church of England, to speak slightingly of the office of the Preacher, and to regard the sermon as merely a secondary consideration, as altogether subordinate to the prayers. For the Priest to offer the prayers of the congregation, or his own prayers on their behalf, *that* was of the utmost importance—much more that he should offer the superstitious sacrifice, which is fast being substituted in the place of the Mass, only at last (it may be feared) to make way for the return, virtually, of the Mass itself. But the preaching was of very little consequence, and might almost be dispensed with altogether. You see how differently our Church at the Reformation lays down the law on this point. No one was even allowed to preach in ordinary Churches,—not even though ordained to be a Minister, and holding a Benefice,—who did not possess the necessary *learning* to warrant his being entrusted with this duty. None but a duly licensed Minister could preach in a country Church; and in a Cathedral Church not every duly licensed Minister, but only such as were approved by the Bishop of the diocese. But were the Country Clergy, because they were in Priests' orders, regarded as competent to supply all the wants of their cures? Was it enough that they could baptize, and marry, and bury,—that they could read the Church Prayers on Weekdays and Sundays, and "offer," as some teach in the present day, "Christ's Body

and Blood" in the Holy Communion? Did our Church show, when her Canons were framed, such contempt or disregard for the office of the Preacher, that she was quite content to provide each parish with the services of a Priest? Far from it! We have seen that Deans and Canons of Cathedral Churches were to be punished by the Bishop, if they did not do their best to provide efficient preachers, to be approved by the Bishop, when they were at any time sick or lawfully absent from their duties. And each country Vicar or Rector was bound also to secure for the edification of his flock a duly licensed preacher once a month, if his living could afford it, and on all other Sundays to read in their hearing, by himself or by one of his curates, one of the Church Homilies. It was well understood *in those days* that the Prophet was of the utmost importance to the religious wellbeing and progress of the people,—as important, at least, as the Priest, —and that they were often not joined in one. It was felt *then* that adequate learning, training, education, was needed to make the Preacher, which was not so necessary for the Priest. It was not then supposed that the mere admission into the order of deacons or priests was enough to entitle a man to stand up in the pulpit, and harangue his fellowmen upon their duties and their beliefs, or to protect him from the charge of arrogance, in sitting down to condemn the writings of his seniors and superiors in the ministry, writings which he has never read and is incapable of reading.

Still the priest—or rather the ruling presbyter—is needed —the officiating minister, as well as the prophet. It is well to have brought before us regularly, by outward signs, by visible and audible intimations, those claims and duties of our higher life, which, in the midst of this life's bustle and excitement and engrossing cares and anxieties, we are so prone to forget. The "sound of the churchgoing bell," —the summons to praise and prayer,—the provision made for the due and orderly admission of our little ones into the Church of Christ by Holy Baptism,—the invitation to draw near together, as children of God's Family, to confess our sins and shortcomings, and renew our vows at the Holy Table,—the opportunities of joining, with heart and soul, with one mind and one mouth, in singing the words, which have expressed the feelings of the most devout saints in all ages,—and of hearing the records, left to us by the piety of ancient times, venerable with the rime of twenty or thirty centuries,—all

these help greatly to maintain alive in us the remembrance of our high calling; they take us out of the world which passes away, into the region of eternal realities. We should go back from Church, if it yielded us no more than this, sobered and solemnized,—it may be, refreshed, and strengthened, and comforted,—unless we came to it with a careless, indifferent, irreverent spirit. And for this the ordained minister will suffice—even if he have not "a tongue like the pen of a ready writer," or an education which fits him to instruct and edify an intelligent congregation by his own compositions, on a level with the requirements of a thoughtful and enquiring age.

For such purposes as these, the institution of the Diaconate and Priesthood exists in our National Church. But as in all human things, while the principle, the idea, is Divine, the form in which it appears is necessarily imperfect, and tends to decay and degradation, so has this ordinance of the ministry,—of certain persons set apart for the service of the Sanctuary, to lead the devotions of the rest, or, as was the Jewish form of devotion, to offer sacrifices for the people,—been degraded into the notion of a sanctity in the *Priest*, differing in kind, or at least in degree, from that which belonged, which was the inheritance, of the *people*. We see how in the days of our Lord the whole body of the Priests rejected him and his Divine teaching. We know how, in the parable of the good Samaritan, he himself represents the Priest and the Levite as passing by on the other side, when they came to the place where a suffering fellow-creature lay. We may therefore conclude that at that time they had forgotten their true mission, to serve their brethren in holy things, and were looking on their office, not as a more awful obligation to cherish personal purity, charity, and love of truth, but as something which in itself gave them a right to say, in their own language in their days, what some say in ours—"Stand thou there in the body of the Church! Come not near to us, in the Chancel! for we, as Priests, are holier than thou."

In the kingdom of the Son of Man, as the outward rite of sacrifice was abolished, so also the Priest, who was the agent in it, disappears. Our whole spirit, soul, and body, is henceforth our offering, and each one, therefore, must of necessity be his own Priest. The "fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name,"—the sweet savour of our daily lives,

bringing praise to God,—is the true incense, and the fumes of myrrh and frankincense become unmeaning. Instead of the Priest, there remains now the Christian *minister* or servant of the congregation; while the people at large are the "royal Priesthood," the members of that head, who—

"sprang out of the tribe of Judah, of which tribe nothing was spoken concerning Priesthood."

How great is this privilege, the birthright of every Christian, the inheritance into which our Lord has introduced us, the liberty of children wherewith Christ has made us free,—that we may each approach without fear the presence of our God, enter into our closet, and shut the door, and pray to "our Father" in secret! Not, indeed, that the saints of the Old Testament might not speak in prayer to Jehovah, the Living God: but it was to One whom they had not been taught, as we have, to look upon as ever near, whose Word is the Light and Life of our hearts, in whom we live and move and have our being. He was present indeed, they thought, at Jerusalem: He dwelt between the cherubim: He manifested Himself, from time to time, in oracular utterances or in mysterious visions. But he was still to be approached, in the ordinary way, only or mainly through the Priest. There were exceptions to this, no doubt; and Prophets, such as Isaiah and Jeremiah, inveighed against the folly of those sacrifices which the Priest performed, while the people's heart was absent, busied with their sinful pleasures and thievish practices, and their hands full of blood. They taught a more spiritual religion in the place of one of rites and ceremonies,—that God will meet him "that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness,"—that—

"eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God hath prepared for them that wait for Him."

But for the mass of the people God was still approached through the Priest: such was their idea of their relations to the Highest, of the relation of Man to his Creator.

But to us "the Son of God has come,"—

"and has given us an understanding that we may know Him that is True, and we are in Him that is True, even in His Son Jesus Christ."

In fellowship with Christ we have fellowship with the Father, his Father and our Father, his God and our God. Manifested by him, we know the Living God as our Father and Friend, as a Spirit to whom all places are alike, whose

dwelling is the pure heart, who hears the sighings of even the prodigal, and hastens to meet the returning penitent.

How is it, then, that the Christian ministry should have assumed to itself the title of priesthood? We hear nothing in apostolic times of any functions appropriate to it, which are parallel to those of the Jewish priesthood. In the apostolic epistles, 'elders' are occasionally mentioned, as we have seen—some, whose duty it was to rule, others, to "labour in the word and doctrine." Nothing whatever is said in them of sacraments to be administered by them alone—of keys of the kingdom of heaven to be kept in their hands. We should never discover from apostolic precepts that without baptism performed by one of apostolic descent no soul could be saved, or that the memorial-feast of love, the bread, the cup of blessing, was only to be celebrated, when some apostolically ordained person was present, to represent him by whom the rite was instituted. Christ himself, in his last prayer, makes no distinction between any as his "priests" and all who should believe "in his name" through the word of his first witnesses. In one word, the idea of a sacred class—sacred not by virtue of real holiness, of purity of heart and lips, of a rich inner wealth of wisdom and love, but by the possession of (so-called) spiritual—rather magical-gifts, and by their office alone entrusted with tremendous powers over the souls of their fellowmen,—the idea of such a class is altogether alien to the spirit of his teaching, who said to his disciples—

"One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

We see easily, however, how, while this notion of the priesthood tends to undue exaltation and spiritual pride in those who adopt it, so the favourite dogma, often held with it, often enforced by means of it, that Christianity has said her last word, that there is nothing to be added, nothing that can ever be added, to the circle of religious truth,—that certain formulæ easily acquired, easily retained, contain all that need or can be known, on the highest subjects which concern the soul,—favours the natural indolence of the human mind, and reduces those who hold it to a state of intellectual apathy. But *words*, especially when they are employed upon things spiritual, inscrutable to sense, are but the faintest reflections of realities. The truth needs ever to be born again in the speech of the living generation, if it is to be living truth for them. Nothing that is true, nothing

that is real and permanent, will fall away: but much, that was a temporary, imperfect, medium for conveying it, will and must pass away and perish. We know how, at the time of the Reformation, the pure spring cleared itself, and issued from the foul morass, in which it was almost lost. But let us not imagine that a standing water will ever long remain pure.

We must not, therefore, too much lament the differences and dissensions amongst us. Differences there must be, from the different points of view under which the same truths—eternally and substantially the same—are regarded by men of different mental powers, training, or circumstances. Let us hope that the bitter feelings, which they engender, are in some cases at least a sign of life, of real care and love for what each esteems to be the truth. Better this than a mere careless spirit of unconcern. In all times, in fact, when there has been a rousing of religious feeling, a return to reality after torpor and indifference, many have thought that they did God service by persecuting those who differed from them. For ourselves, let us remember him who rebuked his disciples, when they wished to call down fire from heaven on those who rejected him. The truth, the truth of God, must in the end prevail, whether we live or not to see its triumph, in the hearts and minds of our fellowmen. Meanwhile, the most implicit acquiescence in the teaching of the wisest should only be regarded by a truth-loving, truth-seeking man, as the *preparation* for wisdom. We cannot take our creeds whole and ready-made into our minds like an article of furniture. We must shape them for ourselves with mental toil and labour. Or, rather, the Word of God must be not only "learned and marked," but "inwardly digested" by the acting of our own minds, the experience of our own hearts and lives, upon it, before it can pass into the very substance of our souls, and become their life.

Hence the need in the teachers of the people of activity of mind, of some research into the past, of some acquaintance with the literature, the science, the modes of thought, of the age. Hence the inefficacy of a ministry which merely enunciates dogmas, instead of calling out, sympathizing with, and guiding, the thoughts of the hearers. For, if the wisdom of the wisest will not avail us, till we have made it our own by patient meditation,—what must it be to have for guides the ignorant, the unwise,—such as would lead us

back to old superstitions, to the worship of the Virgin and of the consecrated elements, to the anathemas and excommunications of the dark ages, to belief in the infallible truth of every statement in the Bible, and a slavish reverence for the dicta of the priest?

No! "there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." Beware then, you that are blessed with knowledge more than others, and rejoice in the light and freedom of the age, how you misuse that Divine Gift, to excuse yourselves in things, which your hearts condemn. Beware lest the light that is in you become thus darkness: for how great will then be that darkness! But think how great an incubus an unlearned clergy must be upon the mind of this generation—at least, of those subject to their influence!—how little power they can have to meet the passing events of the present hour, to guide the restless, enquiring minds of the young! Should the ministers of Christ, instead of leading the armies of the faith, continue to ensconce themselves behind the old decaying walls of mere traditionary teaching, treating as serious facts and realities the stories and myths, under the covering of which truths in themselves Divine were conveyed to the younger world,—remaining contentedly ignorant of all the labours of the present century, and counselling the like ignorance to their flocks,—what grievous injury may ensue to the faith of multitudes, who will hear continually from those in the teacher's place the cuckoo-cry, "If you listen to criticism, you will lose your Christianity, your Religion, your God!"—while at the same time the light of Modern Science, becoming brighter every day, and throwing its beams into every corner, makes it impossible for any thinking, well-informed man to retain any longer faith in many dogmas of the traditionary creed. A learned ministry is a crying necessity of every age. It is especially so of this age, which is one of transition, a reformation-period, in which old authority is weakened, and each one is called to "try the spirits" for himself,—when the rise in the level of general intelligence is so great and perhaps so sudden, that any class, which clings resolutely to the past, is apt to be left behind—the teachers behind the taught!—to the discredit alas! of that which is really true in what they hold.

No! the office of prophet or teacher, which in these days is most commonly combined with that of minister in the

Christian congregation, is not to be rashly undertaken, in the hope that the wide mantle of the office will cover the defects of the individual. Some gifts, at least, from above, some natural powers not below the average, may reasonably be required in him, and by diligence and culture may be made available, in many parts of God's field, for the feeding of His Flock. He will need them, if he would do his duty, when required, as a Christian Pastor, to come to the help of those, whose lives are consumed in worldly business, that they may gain a truer insight into the things which concern their peace here and their hopes of a hereafter,—to disinter by diligent study the essence and kernel of the teaching of Christ and his apostles from the fables and the forms, under which the tradition of bygone centuries of ignorance and superstition has hidden it, and to which even in this day some are seeking to bring us back again into bondage,—to answer questions and doubts, or at least to assuage their painful pressure by the sympathy of a more robust faith, instead of repelling them with an authoritative "It is written!", which is a mere cloak for ignorance, a prohibition of enquiry,—or by a warning to go no further, as if an honest and patient search would issue in the terrible discovery, that there is no God, no Father, no "Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe," no Divine Fellowship, into which the weary soul may enter and be blest! The faithful minister of Jesus Christ must indeed not be ashamed of the Cross of Christ. He must hold out Christ's example of selfsacrificing humility and love, to all those who would follow in his steps and share his crown. But he must not be afraid of the light, which God has shed around both His Works and His Word in the present day. We need not fear the result for all that we should hold most dear, for all that is most essential to us. "The idols"—whatever they may be—"He shall utterly abolish": but "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the seas."

[No. 20.—Second Series.]

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PETER'S, MARITZBURG,

On Sunday Morning, May 20, 1866,

BY THE

RIGHT REVEREND THE LORD BISHOP OF NATAL.

ACTS ii.11.—"*We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.*"

WHAT was the exact nature of that extraordinary event, which we celebrate at this time in the Church as the "gift of tongues"? That there was something in the early Church, something real and remarkable, which is indicated by this expression, cannot be doubted. For we find the apostle Paul distinctly saying, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all," 1Cor.xiv.18. It is plain then that he refers here to some strange power which existed—to some peculiar faculty which was exercised—even at the time when he wrote, perhaps thirty years after the day of Pentecost of which the text is speaking. What was this "gift of tongues"? It is a question this, which must often, I think, have presented itself to many a thoughtful mind among you; and I shall endeavour this morning to answer it as best as I can, reserving to the evening some practical considerations which the subject suggests.

I suppose that the notion most commonly entertained as to the nature of this "gift of tongues,"—among those, at least, who have not studied the question, and have not given any thought to the difficulties with which it is attended,—will be this, that the apostles on the day of Pentecost were endued with a miraculous power of speaking in different languages, which they had never learned, in order that they might

thus be enabled to "go forth into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." But, whatever may have been the gift itself, it is easy to see that this cannot possibly have been the object for which it was given.

For, in the first place, it was not needed. In those days, *Greek* was the language spoken, generally within the bounds of the Roman Empire, to which the labours of the apostles were almost entirely confined. As Dean Stanley has observed (*Corinthians*, p.260):—

> Probably in no age of the world has such a gift—*viz* that of speaking foreign languages—been less needed. The chief sphere of the Apostles must have been within the Roman Empire; and within that sphere Greek or Latin, but especially Greek, must have been everywhere understood.

Accordingly, the story in the Acts proceeds to tell us that St. Peter addressed the whole assembled multitude of Jews and Proselytes, who had come up to keep the Feast at Jerusalem 'from every nation under heaven,' in the Greek language; and he appears to have been readily understood by all of them. If it be said that perhaps we have not his actual address recorded, but only a *translation* from it into Greek, yet at any rate he must, of course, have spoken in some one tongue, which was understood by all: he did not surely speak the same words in a variety of different languages. And, if so, that one tongue would most probably have been either the Greek, which was the common language for all who heard him, as French would be to some extent on the continent of Europe at the present day, or, perhaps, the Syriac, the common tongue of Palestine, since St. Peter more particularly addresses in his discourse 'the men of Judæa and all them that dwelt at Jerusalem,' *v*.14.

Then, again, we do not find that the apostles did actually make use of foreign tongues in speaking or writing to their different flocks. St. Paul on one occasion spoke, we are told, to the Jews living at Jerusalem "in the Hebrew tongue," Acts xxi.40;—

> "and when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence," xxiii.2.

This, which is here called the "Hebrew," was really the "Syriac" tongue, at that time spoken, as I have said, in Palestine: and, consequently, the words here ascribed to St. Paul in our Greek Testaments were not his own actual words, but only a translation of them,—a reminiscence of

his speech expressed in the Greek tongue. And it is well to remember that this is also true of all the discourses ascribed to our Lord himself. There is no doubt that Jesus spoke always the Syriac, the vernacular language of Palestine. And therefore we have nowhere, in the original Gospels, the very words of Christ, but only a reminiscence of them in Greek, except one or two instances, where the actual Syriac words are given, as when he cried upon the cross, "*Eli! Eli!*" or as another Gospel gives it, "*Eloi! Eloi! lama sabacthani!*" that is, "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken me?"

But, although St. Paul on this occasion, addressing a multitude of the Jews of Jerusalem, who all spoke habitually the Syriac tongue, made use of it to show that he, too, was a brother of the race, a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," and so might win his way to their hearts, we do not find that he wrote his epistles in the languages of the people to whom he addressed them. He did not write to "all that were in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints," in Latin, nor to the churches of Galatia in the peculiar dialect of that barbarous province. Barbarous as they were—a colony of Galli or Gauls, settled in Asia Minor—they appear to have understood the Greek tongue. At any rate his epistles, as Dean Stanley observes,—

were all written in Greek, though many of them were addressed to the very nations whose presence is described in the Acts on that occasion [of the day of Pentecost]—the people of Judæa, Cappadocia, Asia, Phrygia, and the dwellers at Rome. When the Lycaonians addressed Paul and Barnabas in the speech of Lycaonia, there is no mention of Paul and Barnabas answering them in that language.

So, too, the other epistles—those ascribed to Peter, John, James, and Jude, by whomsoever really written, for the apostolic origin of some of them, as you know, is very doubtful—were all written in *Greek*. So Claudius Lysias, the Roman chief-captain at Jerusalem, writes a letter to the Governor Felix in *Greek;* and Tertullus, the Roman lawyer, whom the Jews had engaged to plead their cause before the Governor against Paul, addresses Felix in *Greek;* and, no doubt, St. Paul's speech before Festus, Agrippa, and Bernice, was also made in *Greek*. In *Greek* the learned Jew, Philo, wrote all his voluminous works; in *Greek* Josephus composed his histories. In short, *Greek* was then the common language of the civilized world, and would have been understood by most of the motley crowd of Jews and Proselytes, who

came to Jerusalem to worship from the different provinces of the Roman Empire—

"Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and Proselytes, Cretes and Arabians."

Whatever may have been the case with the common people, who were settled as inhabitants in those districts, yet the travellers, "Jews and Proselytes," who came up from those parts to Jerusalem, would understand Greek, and must have understood it, if St. Peter spoke to them in Greek on this occasion. The quotations in the New Testament are habitually made from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures; and, doubtless, out of such a copy was the Ethiopian Eunuch reading the prophet Isaiah, as he sat in his chariot returning from Jerusalem.

And, once more, we know, as a fact, that the apostles did not possess the knowledge of all manner of languages, whether imparted to them in this marvellous way, or not. There is a well-known very ancient tradition, that Mark was "the interpreter of St. Peter." If there is any truth in this tradition, it seems to imply that for some purpose or other St. Mark's greater skill in languages was needed to translate St. Peter's words. So, again, Jerome records a tradition that St. Paul was accompanied by Titus, as a helper,—

"because he could not express in befitting language of the Greek tongue the majesty of the Divine meanings."

And these very traditions, at all events, as one has well observed, Prof. Plumptre, *Dict. of the Bible*, III.p.1587—

must at least be received as testimonies, that the age, which was nearest to the phenomena, did not take the same view of them as those have done who lived at a greater distance.

But, however this may be, we see that the Greek which the Apostles used was by no means *pure Greek*, such as, we must believe, would have resulted from a miraculous gift such as is commonly supposed. It is utterly unlike the true Greek of Greek writers. Some parts of the New Testament are farther removed from the standard of purity than others. But all are written in what is called *Hellenistic* Greek, which, though certainly intelligible to true-born Greeks, would not be regarded by them as genuine utterances in their own tongue, such as would bespeak a

supernatural Divine Instructor. Thus an eminent Commentator speaks of the "phraseology" of the Book of the Revelations as—

receding from all rules of Greek usage, though quite reconcileable with those of Hebrew. *Bloomfield, Gr. Test.*, II.p.647.

And a learned Bishop of our Church has written (Dr. Francis Hare, Bishop of Chichester, 1746, *Difficulties and Discouragements of Reading the Scriptures*) :—

The language even of the New Testament is not to be understood with so little pains as is commonly imagined. It is learnt indeed in schools, and from hence thought to be the easiest Greek that can be read: but they, who have read it in another manner than schoolboys, know it to be quite otherwise. Not to mention the difficulties peculiar to St. Paul, whose epistles are a very great part of the N.T., Plato and Demosthenes are in many respects not so hard as even the easier books. The style, indeed, in the historical books is plain and simple; but, for all that, even those parts have their difficulty. And the whole is written in a language peculiar to the Jews; the idiom is Hebrew or Syriac, though the words be Greek,—which makes some knowledge of those languages still necessary.

For these reasons, then, if we had no other evidence, we should conclude that, whatever this gift itself may have been, it cannot have been intended, as the Rev. Thos. Scott says,—

to qualify the apostles and first preachers of the gospel for their important service, to which their want of learning would have otherwise been an insurmountable hindrance.

They appear to have spoken only, besides their native Syriac, an impure, provincial, dialect of Greek,—such as they may have gathered by constant contact with foreigners; and even Paul, the most learned of the apostles, gives no indication of being master of any other tongues than Greek and Hebrew,—if, indeed, he can be said to have "mastered" the Greek, when his style is often so obscure, so cramped and difficult to be understood, that even Greek commentators, like St. Chrysostom, are puzzled to explain his meaning, and have plainly at times mistaken it,—not to speak of the necessity, as this learned Bishop says, of the reader having some knowledge also of Hebrew or Syriac, in order to comprehend his phraseology. It is surely impossible to believe that such an imperfect knowledge of Greek as this corresponds to the idea of a Divine gift of language, than which, as Mr. Scott says very truly—

a more stupendous miracle can scarcely be imagined; as every one must perceive who carefully considers the subject, and recollects with what difficulty an

adult person acquires the accurate knowledge and pronunciation even of one language, so as to speak it with propriety and without hesitation.

And when he adds—

The persons, therefore, whom the Lord saw good to employ in propagating the Christian religion among the nations, and who were acquainted with foreign languages, could have made no progress in their work, without this special gift, or something equivalent to it,—

it is obvious to reply, that it appears from the narrative in the Acts that the apostles themselves did *not* suppose that the gift, whatever it was, was bestowed upon them for this purpose. For nearly ten years elapsed before Peter was taught, by the vision which he saw upon the housetop, that the Gentile Cornelius, and others like him, were to be received into the Church—that—

"God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him."

What, then, we must ask, did St. Paul mean by saying—

"I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all"?

We will examine into this by considering the various passages, in which St. Paul himself speaks of this "gift of tongues." And this, let me observe, is a much more satisfactory mode of settling the matter, as far as it can be settled, than by appealing to portions of the history as it is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. For, in weighing the latter, we have to enquire first when the account itself was written,—at the same time with the event described? or perhaps at a later age, when many long years had passed, and the real actors in the scene had died, and many parts of the early history of Christianity had been already corrupted by legendary additions, as we have seen in various instances? Whereas the letters of St. Paul place us amidst the very facts to which they refer, and will enable us, I imagine, to form a tolerably clear judgment as to the real nature of this particular spiritual gift, which is called "speaking with tongues."

(i) In the first place, we may observe, that if St. Paul, as he says himself, "spoke with tongues" more than all, and yet appears to have made use of no language but Greek, (except it may be Syriac,) in speaking or writing to the different churches which he founded,—and that, a very impure and irregular Greek,—it is sufficiently plain that this "speaking with tongues," in which he so greatly surpassed others, whatever it may have been, can hardly

have been a speaking fluently and intelligibly,—"with propriety and without hesitation,"—in various languages, for the purpose of instructing and edifying the Church.

(ii) Then, secondly, we note that he speaks rather slightingly, in comparison with other gifts, of the exercise of this particular faculty:—

"I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all: yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue."

He would surely not have said this, if he had the power of uttering intelligibly "ten thousand words" in the languages of Northern Europe, India, and China, so as to carry conviction to the hearts of the inhabitants of those distant regions, and shed the Light of Life upon the eyes of heathen men, yet "sitting in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death."

(iii) Nor does it appear that those, who exercised the gift in question, did speak intelligibly to those who heard them. St. Paul implies this plainly in several places.

"He that speaketh in a tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for *no man understandeth him*: howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth (or preacheth) speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort. He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the Church. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied; for greater is he that prophesieth (that is, preacheth) than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the Church may receive edifying."

But, surely, if the power to speak with tongues enabled the persons so gifted to go out into far distant foreign lands, and preach the Gospel to their fellowmen, St. Paul would hardly have said that he, that preacheth in his own native tongue, is greater than he that speaketh in a foreign tongue. He would rather have bidden these men, endowed with such marvellous powers, to make use of them for the purpose for which they were given. He would have exhorted them to leave father and mother, house and home, if possible, and go forth as the glad heralds of salvation, to the work for which they were expressly endowed, though they sacrificed the goods of this life by so doing, and shared their Master's cross before sharing his crown. Whereas, on the contrary, whenever the "speaking with tongues" is mentioned, there is not one single reference of any kind to that gift being ever used, or capable of being ever used, for instructing and enlightening the heathen.

Nay, it would rather seem from St. Paul's language that those who spoke with tongues did not even speak intelligibly to *themselves*, or did not generally do so, unless they had also the gift of "interpreting" the words they uttered.

"Except ye utter by the tongue a significant speech, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye will be speaking into the air. . . . Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh a barbarian unto me. . . . Wherefore let him that speaketh in a tongue pray that he may interpret. For, if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prayeth, but *my understanding is unfruitful.*"

(iv) The result of all this appears to have been that the general effect of the exercise of this "gift" in the Church was to produce merely wonderment, and not unfrequently confusion, among the hearers.

"If the whole Church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in men unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?"

"If any man speak in a tongue, let it be by two, or at most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the Church; and let him speak to himself and to God."

"Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and *forbid not* to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order."

You see how cautiously St. Paul speaks on this point: "forbid not" to speak with tongues. He does not venture to suppress altogether these peculiar utterances. But he does not encourage them; he absolutely forbids them, unless there be some one present—the speaker himself or some other—to "interpret" the meaning of what is said.

I think that we shall now be in a position to understand more clearly what was the real nature of this gift of tongues. It is very noticeable that in none of his Epistles does St. Paul make any reference whatever to this faculty, except in writing to the Church of Corinth. In this famous Church, planted by St. Paul himself in that wealthy and luxurious city, much party-spirit and much excited feeling prevailed, coupled, as might be expected, with a great want of true Christian Charity, and with not a little looseness of life and open licentiousness. Accordingly, St. Paul in his first Epistle, while recognizing that they were singularly endowed with spiritual gifts,—"in every thing enriched, in all utterance and in all knowledge,"—has yet to reprove them very severely,—to warn them very solemnly,—to tell them that they were "puffed up" with pride, self-conceit, and selfsufficiency,—to demand of them—

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?"—

to say to this highly-privileged Church, filled at that time with a complacent spirit of self-exaltation—

"Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

And to this same Church it is that he depreciates so much the importance of this "gift of tongues." In his catalogue of spiritual powers, he puts it last of all:—

"God hath set some in the Church, first, apostles, secondly, prophets (that is, preachers), thirdly, teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, *diversities of tongues*.

"Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all *speak with tongues?* do all interpret?" 1Cor.xii.28-30.

And once more he gives in another part of the same chapter a long list of spiritual gifts and graces, and in this also, evidently with set purpose, he places the "gift of tongues" at the end of all, as of the least importance, and not to be desired in comparison with many other much more common gifts.

"To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *kinds of tongues;* to another the interpretation of tongues." 1Cor.xii.8-10.

And now remember that in no other of his epistles does St. Paul make any reference at all to this power,—not even in his second long epistle to the same Church, when he writes to them with tender affection, pouring out his heart towards them, after he had heard of the salutary effect produced by his first letter:—

"O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. . . . Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you. I am filled with comfort; I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation."

Nor does any other of the epistles of the N.T., those of James and Peter, John and Jude, make the slightest reference to any such a power existing in the early Church. Nor is any mention whatever made of such a gift by any of the earlier Fathers of the Church, till we come to the time of Irenæus, who died in the year A.D. 202, and who says (*Adv. Hær.* v. 6) that there were brethren in his time, "who had prophetic gifts and spoke through the Spirit in all kinds of tongues." And then, as one has written, Prof. Plumptre, *Dict. of the Bible*, III.p.1560,—

After this, within the Church, we lose nearly all traces of them. The mention of them (on Ps.xlvi) by Eusebius (340, A.D.) is vague and uncertain.

The tone in which Chrysostom (407 A.D.) speaks of them (on 1Cor.xiv) is that of one who feels the whole subject to be obscure, because there are no phenomena within his own experience at all answering to it. The whole tendency of the Church was to maintain reverence and order, and to repress all approaches to the ecstatic state. Those who yielded to it took refuge, as in the case of Tertullian, in sects outside the Church. *Symptoms of what was then looked on as an evil showed themselves in the 4th century at Constantinople,—wild, inarticulate cries, words passionate, but of little meaning, almost convulsive gestures,—and were met by Chrysostom with the sternest possible reproof.*

With such absence of all satisfactory evidence of the existence of such supernatural gifts in the post-apostolic time, it is impossible to lay any stress on the single testimony of Irenæus. There may have been many instances of the same unnatural excitement in *his* time, as two centuries afterwards in the time of Chrysostom, which deserved to be checked and censured, instead of commended. We know, in fact, that Irenæus himself had to learn, as any modern missionary, the language of the people of Gaul, among whom he was stationed as Bishop. But, if in later days enthusiasm and excitement produced such effects, how can we doubt that the same elements were at work also in that disorderly Church of Corinth in St. Paul's time? It is plain from all his expressions that he almost feared this. He was absent from his flock; he could not, or would not, come to them immediately; he would rather send a letter of rebuke, and wait to see its effect upon them. But he had evidently heard that there were many among them pretending to extraordinary spiritual gifts,—not such as were useful for the purpose of edifying, but but such as made those who exhibited them conspicuous, and brought no profit to the Church. He could not undertake to say that these pretensions were unreal,—the fruit only of excited and enthusiastic feelings,—such as Chrysostom afterwards had occasion to reprove, and such as we also have known among modern devotees, not only in heathen lands, but among Christian communities, and especially a few years ago in a London congregation, under one of the most eminent Scotch Pastors of the age. I may quote a passage from the record left by one of the persons who fell under this influence, and was supposed to have had the "gift of tongues."

Whilst sitting at home, a mighty power came upon me, but for a considerable time no impulse to utterance. Presently, a sentence in French was vividly set before my mind, and, under an impulse to utterance, was spoken. Then, in a little time, sentences in Latin were in like manner uttered, and, with short intervals, sentences in many other languages, judging from sound, and the different exercise of the enunciating organs. My wife, who was with me,

declared some of them to be Italian and Spanish, the first she can read and translate, the second she knows but little of. In this case she was not able to interpret, nor retain the words as they were uttered. All the time of these utterances I was greatly tried in mind. After the first sentence, an impulse to utterance continued on me, and most painfully I restrained it, my conviction being that, until something was set before me to utter, I ought not to yield my tongue to utterance. Yet I was troubled by the doubt—"What could the impulse mean, if I were not to yield to it?" Under the trial I did yield my tongue for a few moments; but the utterance that broke from me seemed so discordant, that I concluded that the impulse, without words given, was a temptation, and I restrained it, except as words were given me, and then I yielded. Sometimes single words were given me and sometimes sentences, though I could neither recognize the words nor sentences as any language I knew, except those which were French or Latin.

Here then were excellent persons, fully persuaded that these were Divine gifts, and their minister, as you know, himself believed as fully in the reality of these phenomena. We in our day have no difficulty in concluding that the whole of them were due to a state of religious excitement, unnatural and undesirable—very hurtful indeed to the true spiritual life. It can hardly be doubted that something of the same kind took place at Corinth, which was reported to the Apostle, and caused him much anxiety, though he could not undertake to pronounce it an entire delusion. He does what he can, therefore, to check their eagerness for these manifestations of spiritual power. He says—

"Inasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek ye that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church."

Desire that ye may be able to prophesy or preach, rather than to speak with tongues; or, if any speak in a tongue, let him pray that he may interpret also, so that what he says may really benefit the Church. "Wherefore covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues." But remember withal that, though a man speak with the tongues of men and of angels,—though he have prophesy, the power of preaching, and can understand all mysteries and all knowledge,—though he have a liberal hand, and bestow largely of his goods to feed the poor,—though he have all zeal, so as not only to give the bodies of others to the stake, as many are ready enough to do, but to sacrifice his own body also, or his own highest worldly interests, for the maintenance of his creed,—yet, with all these gifts and endowments of the Spirit, he is nothing, "as sounding brass or a tinkling symbol," if he have not above all charity, the true spirit of a Christian,—long-suffering, kind, free from envy, self-glorification, self-conceit, self-display, self-seeking,

—not ready to take offence or impute evil,—not pleased with the falls and frailties of others, but sympathising with what is good, wherever it is found,—

"bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things."

But what, then, does St. Paul mean by saying that he himself "spoke with tongues more than they all"? The original Greek is variously translated by different interpreters. But those very "orthodox" commentators of the present day upon "the Life and Epistles of St. Paul," (Conybeare and Howson), render the words thus—"I offer thanksgivings to God *in private*, speaking in tongues to him, more than any you." The words "in private" are not indeed expressed in the Greek; but they appear to be implied by the apostle's own words,—"If there be no interpreter, let him keep silence *in the Church:* and let him speak to himself, *and to God.*" And so St. Paul says—"This is what I do: I give thanks to God, in the secret of my own heart, speaking to myself in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,—in deep mysterious utterances of the soul, not articulate words of human speech, but voices of the heart, words such as the "tongues of angels" utter. And so he says elsewhere—

"I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago,—(whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell—God knoweth,)—such an one caught up to the third heaven: and I knew such a man,—(whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell—God knoweth,)—how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard *unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*"

St. Paul, in fact, as these words sufficiently indicate, had a great deal of mystical enthusiasm in his character, and, as such, was repeatedly the subject of visions and revelations. And, besides this, he was continually 'giving thanks' to God in his heart, in thoughts too deep for human utterances—in the strange tongue of the spirit-world, which would not be intelligible to ordinary men. But these ecstatic movements of the soul,—these "groanings which could not be uttered,"—these bursting songs of praise, which rang through his inner being at times, and carried him almost beside himself, "up to the third heaven," "up into Paradise,"—he suppressed within his bosom, speaking only in silent thought to himself and to God. And he would have his disciples at Corinth do the same, if they felt overpowered by some Divine visitation, and tempted to draw attention to themselves—to make a boast of themselves—by uttering strange sounds, which none could explain, for none could

understand. Whatever he might do in private, he would rather in the Church, he says, speak five intelligible words, for the edification of others, than make a display of uttering ten thousand words in "a tongue." Our E.V. has everywhere "an *unknown* tongue." But you will find the word "unknown" printed in italics, to show that it does not exist at all in the original: in the Greek it is simply "a tongue" or "tongues."

Such is the true meaning, I believe, of the passages in the first epistle to the Corinthians, which dwell upon this subject of "speaking with tongues": and this is the only part of all the epistles which makes any distinct reference at all to it. In the Acts we have three places which refer to it. In one it is said that, while Peter was speaking to Cornelius and his friends, and *before* they were baptized, "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word," and they "heard them *speak with tongues* and magnify God," x.44,46; in another, St. Paul lays his hands on certain disciples of John the Baptist, *after* they were baptized, and "the Holy Ghost came on them, and they *spake with tongues* and prophesied." In these cases, certainly, it cannot be supposed that all those individuals were gifted at once with the astonishing power to speak foreign languages which they had never learned,—much less that they were endowed with this stupendous faculty, in order to be fitted to go as missionaries to heathen lands; for there is no reason to believe that either Cornelius and all his party, or those disciples of John the Baptist, were ever so employed. It is probable that these notices in the Acts are only the reflection of the later age in which they were written, and of the character of the person by whom they were written: and the same may be true of the third account in the Acts, from which the text is taken, the account of what took place on the day of Pentecost. In fact, it is remarkable that St. Peter, in the discourse ascribed to him on that occasion, does not make any reference to the variety of languages in which not only the apostles themselves, but all the members of the Church, "one hundred and twenty souls," men, women, and children, are stated to have spoken; though indeed it is difficult to conceive of so many persons all speaking at one time, and speaking in different languages, yet speaking so as to be understood by those who heard them; for while some said, "These men are full of new wine,"—in exact

agreement with St. Paul's words, "Will they not say that ye are mad?"—We are told that others said—

"We do hear them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

There is yet one more passage of Scripture, in which the "speaking with tongues" is mentioned—I mean that well-known verse in Mark xvi.17:—

"And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall *speak with new tongues:* they shall take up serpents; and, if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Here, however, it is promised that not only shall the 'gift of tongues,' but other miraculous powers, be bestowed generally upon "them that believe,"—upon all believers without exception in all ages, not merely upon the apostles or the first disciples. It need hardly be said that this promise has not been realised. But, in fact, as I have already explained on the authority of Dean Alford, there is really no doubt—the present Archbishop of York says "it is probable"—that the last twelve verses of St. Mark, in which this passage occurs, formed no part of the original Gospel, but are an addition made at a later time, and, as I believe, breathing, like the passages in the Acts, the spirit of the age in which they were written.

Yet if, instead of the *literal* meaning of these words, which is encumbered with the ignorance of the time and of the writer, we take the *spiritual* meaning,—that to which the mind of humanity is ever pointing, for which the heart of humanity is ever sighing,—we shall find living bread for our souls to feed on. The Truth and Being of God, and His "wonderful works" to the children of men, are ever being revealed afresh in the speech of successive generations. Even Gregory the Great of old had a glimpse of this, when he wrote as follows, though his words are tinged with the sacerdotal spirit of the age:—

Because we are not able to do these miracles, are we therefore not among "them that believe"? These things were necessary indeed in the beginning of the Church. . . . But the Church does daily in a spiritual manner what it did then by the Apostles in a temporal sense. When the priests lay their hands upon believers by the grace of exorcism, and forbid malignant spirits to dwell in their minds, what else do they do but cast out devils? And all the faithful, who now abandon the words of this world, and utter forth sacred mysteries, these *speak with new tongues,*—they, who by their good exhortations take away ill-feeling from the hearts of others, these *take up serpents,*—they who, while listening to pestilent counsels, are not in any degree drawn on to evil practice, these *drink what is deadly, but it does not hurt them,*—they who, when they see their neighbours failing in good works, by the example of their own

exertions invigorate their life, these *lay hands upon the sick that they may recover.* Which miracles in fact are so much the greater, inasmuch as they are spiritual, and inasmuch as by these not bodies, but souls, are raised up.

Yes! and not only shall the faith and practice of our fathers, what they knew and believed, what they said and sang, contribute to supply the substance, and to suggest the form, of our hymns of praise; but with "new tongues" are we to praise the Father in this our own day, with wider knowledge of His ways, with insight purified by that knowledge from the errors and superstitions of the past. Still does the Spirit of God descend upon the children of men, and specially upon His faithful worshippers, His Church Universal, the true in heart and life in every land. Still does faith in the Unseen prevail to the overcoming of all seeming evils and all mortal and immortal enemies, turning poison into medicine, and suffering into discipline, and inspiring the tongues of feeble men with words of Divine Love and Eternal Truth.